

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 Sub 1. A method of searching for data in one or more heterogeneous data sources within a  
2 computer system, the method comprising the steps of:  
3 receiving a request for data at a federated data source; and  
4 selecting a server to process the request based on a load of the server and based on whether the  
5 server can satisfy the request for data.

1 Sub 2. The method of claim 1, further comprising forwarding the request to the selected  
2 server.

1 3. The method of claim 2, further comprising forwarding additional requests for similar  
2 data to the selected server.

1 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the server is within a server hierarchy.

1 Sub 5. The method of claim 1, further comprising, upon receiving a request to add another  
2 server, connecting the server to an existing server in the server hierarchy based on a number of  
3 connections of the existing server.

1 6. The method of claim 1, further comprising, upon receiving a request to delete an  
2 existing server in the hierarchy, deleting that server.

1 Sub 7. An apparatus for searching for data in one or more heterogeneous data sources,  
2 comprising:  
3 a computer system having one or more heterogeneous data sources; and  
1 one or more computer programs, performed by the computer system, for receiving a request  
2 for data at a federated data source and selecting a server to process the request based on a load of the  
3 server and based on whether the server can satisfy the request for data.

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1 8. The apparatus of claim 7, further comprising forwarding the request to the selected  
2 server.

1 9. The apparatus of claim 8, further comprising forwarding additional requests for similar  
2 data to the selected server.

1 10. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the server is within a server hierarchy.

1 *Sub All* 11. The apparatus of claim 7, further comprising, upon receiving a request to add another  
2 server, connecting the server to an existing server in the server hierarchy based on a number of  
3 connections of the existing server.

1 12. The apparatus of claim 7, further comprising, upon receiving a request to delete an  
2 existing server in the hierarchy, deleting that server.

1 *Sub C3* 13. An article of manufacture comprising a program storage medium readable by a  
2 computer system and embodying one or more instructions executable by the computer system to  
3 perform method steps for searching for data in one or more heterogeneous data sources within a  
4 computer system, the method comprising the steps of:

1 receiving a request for data at a federated data source; and

2 selecting a server to process the request based on a load of the server and based on whether the  
3 server can satisfy the request for data.

1 14. The article of manufacture of claim 13, further comprising forwarding the request to  
2 the selected server.

1 15. The article of manufacture of claim 14, further comprising forwarding additional  
2 requests for similar data to the selected server.

1 16. The article of manufacture of claim 13, wherein the server is within a server hierarchy.

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17. The article of manufacture of claim 13, further comprising, upon receiving a request  
to add another server, connecting the server to an existing server in the server hierarchy based on a  
number of connections of the existing server.

18. The article of manufacture of claim 13, further comprising, upon receiving a request  
to delete an existing server in the hierarchy, deleting that server.

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